

# STORY

## STRATEGY GUIDE

# HOW TO BUILD UNSTOPPABLE BRAND & CULTURE

**4-COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES  
FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**





# ARE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IMPACTING YOUR BRAND AND CULTURE?

Us leaders are facing a significant problem. We've reached a point where being good at what we do just isn't enough anymore to get and keep attention.

And attention of prospective students, talented faculty, and top-tier leaders is what we need most. Because being able to make, maintain, and multiply attention gives us leaders the opportunity to build belief, buy-in, and engagement.

**In short, ATTENTION is our currency.  
And without it, we are being ignored.**

## 60-SECOND ASSESSMENT

How well do you and your institution make, maintain, and multiply attention? (Rate on scale of 1 to 10)

**1** Marketing / Branding  
(external communication)

**2** Team / Staff  
(internal communication)

What's *one thing* you can do better in your communication to get and keep more attention?

**3**





# TOP 3

# COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

## 1

### Broken / Incomplete Communication Strategy

- Executed by young but inexperienced talent
- Held back by tenured staff in need of up-skilling & retraining

## 2

### Marketing Agency & Vendor Disconnect

- Outsourced without guidance, direction, and input
- Remember “Their Vision, their story, with your logo and colors, just doesn’t work!”

## 3

### Culture Stuck / Engagement Stagnant

- People are going through the motions
- Leaders & teams not aligned on important efforts & direction
- Lower than expected engagement, buy-in, and belief

### 60-Second Assessment

Summarize how the above communication challenges have impacted your brand / culture?







# BEST STORY WINS

Fact is Best Story Wins. Not the best people, not the best service, not the best product. The winners are the companies and leaders that communicate the best stories.

## 60-Second Assessment

How well do you communicate / story-tell?  
(Rate on scale of 1 to 10)

**1** Marketing / Branding  
(external communication)

**2** Team / Staff  
(internal communication)

How would sharing and communicating powerful stories  
impact student enrollment, recruitment, and culture?

**3**

**THE  
SOLUTION**



# WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT MOST?

Facts, functions, and features have become commodities. **People value and want...**

# 1

## **Sense of Purpose**

- Feeling meaning & depth
- Feeling transformation

# 2

## **Connection & Belonging**

- Feeling connected
- Feeling like a part of something

# 3

## **Emotional Experience**

- Feeling beyond facts / utility
- Feeling more than function

## **60-Second Assessment**

How much FACT vs FEELING is in your communication?  
(Rate on scale of 1 to 10)

	FACT	FEELING
<b>1</b> Marketing / Branding (external communication)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>2</b> Team / Staff (internal communication)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

What's one thing you can do to create more emotional connection in your communication?

# 3





# STRATEGY #1

## UNIFYING BRAND STORY

Build a Unifying Brand Story (UBS) that details how your company adds value (FUNCTION & FEELING) to your customers.

Three Stories to Include in Your UBS:

# 1

### The Customer Story

- Map out the customer journey and how your institution solves problems and provides a deep connection to product and purpose (think transformation not just transaction).

# 2

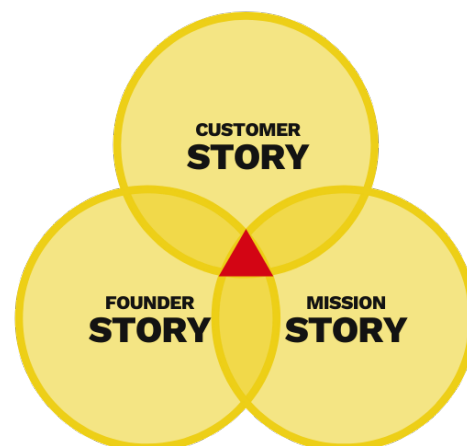
### The Founder Story

- Map out the main “Founder Story” detailing the founding of the institution. Make sure it’s relevant and relatable to the customer story. Then have each staff member create their own Founder Story that connects them to the customer and institution (again think transformation not just transaction).

# 3

### The Mission Story

- Map out what your institution stands for. Include the idea and ethic that you all are fighting for in the world. Your mission story should create a clear line in the sand that signals organizational values and where core focus resides.



**Story Overlap:** stories on your UBS should overlap creating synergy between each story and all communication efforts.

### 60-Second Assessment

How would having a UBS impact your communication, brand, and culture?





## STRATEGY #2

# STRATEGIC COM-PLAN

Once you have a Unifying Brand Story, develop a 1-Page clear but comprehensive Strategic Communication Plan (SCP). It should detail how you will use the UBS for all communication projects and initiatives.

### Three Tips for Your Strategic Com-Plan (SCP)

## 1 Keep Your SCP Simple & Clear

- Fight complexity and the urge to make your SCP a work of art. It should be direct, simple, and clear. Here's our UBS and here's how and where we will use it to communicate.

## 2 Update Communication Channels

- Add a timeline to evaluate and update all existing communication channels so that you can update them. At a minimum include your website, social media channels, and marketing content/collateral.

## 3 Create New Communication Channels

- Don't let your Strategic Com-Plan collect dust. Use it to create new and improved communication channels—for example, new branded segments, podcasts, videos, and customer-facing communication projects.

Unifying  
Brand Story

Strategic  
Com-Plan

Leadership  
Execution



GETTING & KEEPING MORE  
**= ATTENTION**

### 60-Second Assessment

How would having a simple and clear Strategic Com-Plan impact your communication for building brand and culture?







## STORY SYNERGY

Story Brand isn't an idea, it's the irreplaceable feeling that drives deep connection to your company products, services, and culture. This means leadership has to create "Story Synergy" by evaluating all touch for customers and staff to see how to amplify the brand experience.

### Three Story Synergy Ideas To Consider

# 1

#### Expect A Huge R.O.I.

- Most institutions have empty customer service efforts, never knowing the target FEELING, message, and experience they want to deliver. With a UBS, leaders have a considerable advantage because they have a clear, compelling, and simple target.

# 2

#### Expect Small Financial Investments

- Enhancing the customer experience to match and mirror your UBS most times costs little to nothing. That's because creating an intentional FEELING in your customers isn't a function of how much you spend. It's a function of intent and creativity in amplifying how customers experience your Unifying Story Brand.

# 3

#### Expect Purposeful Effort

- Huge R.O.I. and small investment is the potential, but not the promise of Story Synergy. Leaders will need to uncover patterns that hinder Story Synergy. Further, once leaders identify opportunities, they will need to lead initiatives from an idea into a process and culture..



### 60-Second Assessment

Score each area of your institution from 1 to 10 for Story Synergy. Remember, Story Synergy is the degree that you purposefully create a Unifying Brand Experience in each area.

☐ **Total Score:** add your Story Synergy scores and enter the total into the red square (max score is 50 points)





# STRATEGY #4

# STORY BRAND CULTURE

Executing Story Synergy will create quick wins and help you leverage low hanging fruit. But for things to stick, leaders will have to be strategic by “Cultivating” a purposeful Story Brand Culture.

### Three Tips for Creating a Story Brand Culture

1

### Create a Simple Leadership Process

- Living it to lead it is foundational. But to cultivate a new and improved culture will require new processes or embedding your UBS into action. At Lead Your Story, we use the 5C's of Culture as simple model for helping clients create purposeful leadership processes.

2

### Live It To Lead It

- Your UBS and all the work from Strategies 1-3 are only guides and maps. Maps that will require leaders to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. At this stage, you need what we call Living Leadership.

3

### Don't Wait... Cultivate

- As a leader, you must “cultivate” the culture that you want to see grow. Remember, weeds grow on their own, but culture requires dialed in attention and purposeful care.



### Have A Target & Practice Hitting It

1. Clear Targets
2. Clear KPI / OKR
3. Regular Review
4. Make Time to PDR (practice-drill-rehearse)

### Cultivate Excellence & Expectations (e<sup>2</sup>)

1. Calibrate e<sup>2</sup>
2. Call e<sup>2</sup> to Mind Often
3. Celebrate e<sup>2</sup>
4. Commemorate e<sup>2</sup>
5. Condemn Mediocrity

### Create Rapid RAW Feedback Loops To Improve & Grow

1. Recognize (+ positives)
2. Acknowledge (- negatives)
3. Work (= to do)





**BOOK YOUR  
DISCOVERY CALL  
TODAY**

# BEST STORY WINS

We can help you with your communication strategies to lead your company in creating an unstoppable brand and culture.




**BOOK YOUR DISCOVERY CALL**

**\*\* Click Here or Call (800) 425-2095 \*\***

[story@leadyourstory.com](mailto:story@leadyourstory.com)

Call / Text +1 (800) 425-2095

 **LEADYOURSTORY**



**LEADYOURSTORY.COM**  
story@leadyourstory.com

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